

Book Review for Transport Reviews: *The transport debate*, by Shaw and Docherty.

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Book Description

The lucid and accessible analysis of the key policy issues of transport is more than welcomed, now when the link between social and economic efficiency and transport is more than proved. The authors, two experts in the field, Shaw and Docherty give concise information on a timeliness topic showing that decision-making in transport (i.e. privatization of transport networks and services) has long term negative effects on the mobility of people and their accessibility to their key life activities. Moreover, they present relevant topics (i.e. social exclusion by transport), often forgotten in the still too often technology-centered approach of governments (i.e. HSR investments in UK, Spain). They show that a substandard transport system creates economic, social and environmental costs, but that socially improving of transport system makes it economically attractive. Using the journey journal format, Shaw and Docherty report the journeys of Smith family as the basis for their *Transport debate*. In this way they introduce five main purposes of journey (i.e. work, school, business, social events and leisure) for discussing the key transport issues and take a picture of the current status of UK transport system.

The use of the rhetoric figure of “*faire semblant*” to be a specific transport user makes the book interesting and readable for a large public: policy-makers, transport experts and even users that could learn the standard of transport service they merit and how to get it.

Transport Debate has the aim of making aware UK policy makers and UK transport users about their transport organization and services and its real quality in respect to other EU transport standard services. Each purpose of journey gives to the authors the opportunity for speaking of transport issues in a, sometimes, grotesque way. All that allows remembering key arguments of this clever debate about transport. Definitely, this book merits a large visibility contributing to the current body knowledge and pointing out two main UK transport issues that could be easily found in other world countries: the terrible consequences of the education and governmental campaign (i.e. the Thatcher lemma: bus is for losers) and the effects of transport and urban planning policies creating urban sprawling and therefore car dependency for a large part of inhabitants.

Transport debate is oriented to highlight the still relevance of transport for linking mobility with accessibility. Actually, ICT technology innovations didn't debilitate this link. The agglomeration economies effects show that human contact and concentration is still important.

The authors conducted a deep analysis of UK transport issues, and they touch all key questions of technological innovation and financial assessment (CBA of HSR vs. the benefits of low cost mobility policies) related to the transport. Moreover, they identify future research needs related with the analysis of ICT impacts on transport coordination issues (i.e. time table coordination), with the public participation (i.e. multi-actors and multi-scale governance), with subsidies design scheme and equity issues.

Definitely, we can only suggest reading this book that could produce a reader-drive innovation. A possible critique could be related to the presentation of the UK Transport system that seems to be the worst system in Europe for urban and long distance mobility. They present London, where transport system seems to work quite well, and the desert of the rest of UK. It is thru that the privatization and deregulation affected urban and inter-urban mobility of second rang

cities through bus system privatization and its deregulation. However, some interesting municipal initiatives in the second rang UK metropolitan areas (i.e. Liverpool, Manchester) have been carried out to make transport accessible for all. In addition, various local authorities have tried to define measures and local transport plans to reinforce social inclusiveness by transport (i.e. West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority). Sometimes, the journey journal of Smith family seems as caricature, and the reader misses a positive comment on a positive transport experience.